

An advocate for the theological diction, who should hesitate to maintain its necessity or utility on the ground that a considerable proportion of it has grown out of the language of scripture, may yet think it has become necessary in consequence of so many people having been so long accustomed to it. I cannot but be aware, that many respectable teachers of Christianity would find a very great difficulty to depart from their inveterate usage. Nor could they acquire, if the change were attempted, a happy command of a more general language, without being considerably conversant with good writers on general subjects, and sedulously exercising themselves to throw their thoughts into a somewhat similar current of language. Unless, therefore, this study has been cultivated, or is intended to be cultivated, it will perhaps be better for *them*, especially if far advanced in life, to retain the accustomed mode of expression with all disadvantages. Younger theological students, however, are supposed to become acquainted with those authors who have displayed the utmost extent and powers of language in its freest form : and it is right for them to be told that evangelical doctrine would incur no necessary corruption or profanation by being conveyed in so liberal, diversified, and what I may call *natural* a diction ; a language which may be termed the day-light of thought, as compared with the artificial lights of the peculiar dialect.—With regard also to a considerable proportion of

to make quite so much alteration as those principles might warrant. All who have long venerated the scriptures in their somewhat antique version, would protest against their being laboriously modernized into every nice conformity with the present standard of the language, and against any other than a very literal translation. If it* could be supposed that our language had not yet attained a fixed state, but would progressively change for ages to come, it would be desirable that the translation of the Bible should always continue, except in what might essentially affect the sense, a century or two behind, for the sake of that venerable air which a shade of antiquity confers on the form, of what is so sacred and authoritative in substance. But I cannot allow that the same law is to be extended to the language of divines. *They* have no right to assume the same ground and the same distinctions as the Bible; they ought not to affect to keep it company. There is no solemn dignity in their writings, which can claim to be invested with a venerable peculiarity. Imitate the Bible or not, then—composition is merely of the ordinary human quality, and subject to the same rules as that of their contemporaries who write on other subjects. And if they remain behind the advanced state of the classical diction, those contemporaries will not allow them to excuse themselves by pretending to identify themselves with the Bible.